

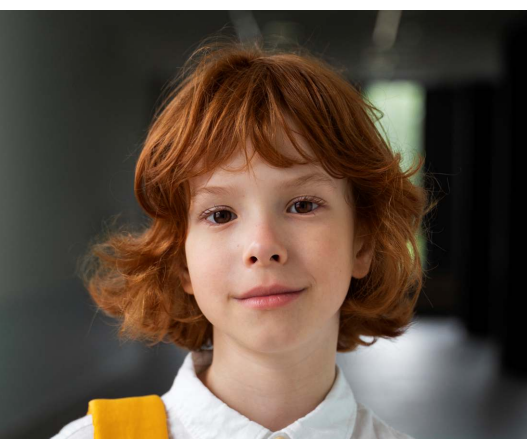


UNIVERSAL
ENLIGHTENMENT
& FLOURISHING



The Flourishing Child

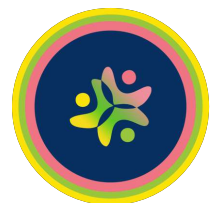
School Program Guide | Elementary Grades



Love



Learn



Play

About Us

Universal Enlightenment and Flourishing, UEF, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to human flourishing and religious literacy, which we do by creating, curating, and distributing content.

Scholars from across disciplines and leaders of all faiths have battled with the fundamental questions of living a fulfilled life- that of good and evil, truth and falsehood, right and wrong, life and death, the meaning of life, and the purpose of our existence.

UEF has found a simple insight to leading a flourishing life, one which emphasizes a common universality for all humans: To Flourish is to Love, Learn & Play.

These three deep seated existential longings of Love, Learn, and Play, are relatable concepts for every human of every age and race. This framework is as simple as it is profound.

UEF seeks to explore and demonstrate how the LLP framework is applicable at all stages of life, across all professions and vocations, across cultures, ethical traditions, and belief systems. Most importantly, the insights from UEF's flourishing framework are compatible with all belief systems faiths.

Love, Learn, Play for Human Flourishing: Positioning the Curriculum in the Educational Rubric

What is the purpose of the education of humans as we move into the future?

Over a decade ago, education researcher Carl Grant effectively argued a point teachers and educators in the field long suspected. He envisioned a more robust goal than preparing people for the workforce; the goal of education should be to empower students to cultivate a flourishing life (Grant).

The Human Flourishing Program at Harvard University attempts to quantitate Human Flourishing by juried research; they propose that conversation about human happiness should be broadened in the education and research communities (VanderWeele). Specifically, they argue that while prior research has used measures of community engagement, mental and physical health, and income, new research should also look at all-encompassing happiness, satisfaction, meaning and purpose, social relationships, character, and virtue.

In the United States, many state governments have adopted curricula or school initiatives towards what is termed Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). The US organization CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) has organized SEL into five competencies including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. These competencies are brought into the American school rubric not by direct instruction so much as by the retraining of academic staff to adjust their approach to working with students (Greenberg 14).

Love, Learn, Play for Human Flourishing: Positioning the Curriculum in the Educational Rubric

CASEL defined SEL in 1997, and from there, research supported the effectiveness of the discipline in improving student outcomes. Research, however, generally bases positive outcomes on academic grades and test score improvement in other disciplines, and on factors such as attendance and disciplinary issues.

In short, American students are still following educational initiatives that allow them to become better workers and contributors to the economy, versus imparting the student with skills to lead a flourishing life. SEL could therefore be seen as deficit-based in its original motivations. Many of its tenets grew from intervention programs designed to reduce long and short-term behavioral problems in schools, and later, in adulthood. In a review of available SEL programs, many are targeted towards intervention programs for low-income and underperforming schools, where students' poor test scores are seen as leading towards poor performance as productive members of society. In fact, SEL is often viewed as a public health program (Greenberg 90).

In this curriculum, Universal Enlightenment and Flourishing (UEF) proposes lesson activities in a series that promotes Love, Learn, and Play as a way of life that allows students to not only succeed, but also Flourish. The curriculum is meant to be universal, drawing concepts from philosophy, religion, and educational research.

Love, Learn, Play for Human Flourishing: Positioning the Curriculum in the Educational Rubric

In summary, this curriculum proposes that developing a mindset where students deeply engage in loving, learning, and playing in whatever they do will enable the student to flourish, rather than addressing only deficiencies, throughout their lives. The goal is loftier than those found in current health and SEL curricula available in the US, and the target audience is humankind.

The UEF curriculum seeks to enhance the loving and playful qualities in children, which nurtures a curious mindset to enhance learning.



Love in education in United States curriculum standards is limited to romantic relationships and sexual love. Sex education is variable through state curricula and in different localities. While love often shows up in the literary canon of humanities courses, it is not approached as a stand-alone concept for exploration.

"The lack of research on love in education is troubling in that while love seems too obvious to study, it is too important not to."

– Lisa Goldstein (Goldstein 8)

While much has been written on the idea of love, and it has definitions in almost every culture, language, and religion in the world, there is no standard curriculum for thinking about it in a secular school environment.

"Agape love is pure love, unlimited in its possibilities. Agape love is altruistic love, love that is given for its own sake"

– (Templeton 1)

Altruistic love that brings humans joy is a love that grows by self-sacrifice, kindness, and compassion. It's a type of love that loves service to others and selflessness. It is known in philosophy by the Greek term "agape."



The African concept of Ubuntu is another example of selfless love; a love that suffuses people when they tie themselves to others' well being.

"I am a person through other people. My humanity is tied to yours."

-Ubuntu, a Zulu proverb

Researchers have defined and studied how successful teachers tie love for their students into teaching. Some ways teachers express love is through caring, fairness and respect, conscientiousness, relationship building, and enthusiasm (Deci).

How else do people use the word "love?" Most cultures use the term to express passion or enthusiasm for an external activity or item, or other artifacts. There is the love of self, friends, country, and of course, romantic love to name a few.

While this curriculum focuses on Agape Love (ubuntu, selfless service, "altruism"), students are asked to explore all of their understandings of the concept of love. It draws from SEL and life skills curricula, modern philosophical concepts such as the five love languages (Chapman), and older philosophical ideas from cultures around the world. Students also explore the science of the heart and mind connection, and the psychology and physiology of love (Anderson).



Literature on the neuroscience and practical aspects of learning is extensive and broad; in education, this is the literature upon which good classroom practice and outstanding curriculum is based. Here we provide a short summary of the research upon which the curriculum activities rest.

In the education of educators, untested theories of neuroscience have created pervasive myths that can lead to ineffective interventions (Bellert). The curriculum presented here focuses on teaching young people what we know currently about how the brain works in the context of learning. Research shows clear evidence that learning about how the mind works, and gaining positive associations with learning, gives children and young adults positive outcomes in education (Boaler).

Several of the proposed curricular activities on learning are designed to teach and reinforce knowledge of how the brain learns (Mirror Neurons, Temporal Preference (Medina), Pruning, Working Memory Models). Others are designed to show students that there is no barrier to learning for any individual (Neuroplasticity, Procrastination and Motivation). One activity gives an example of a functional way to take in information and learn from it (Mind-Mapping) and one simply studies the brain organ itself (Brain Hats); many study skills programs have extensive examples of this type of activity. The final group of activities is designed to teach that learning throughout life is a joyful pursuit that leads to flourishing (Creativity and Joy (Karwowski), Emotions and Learning (Immordino-Yang)).



Play is a process during which individuals are free and self-directed, and commit themselves internally to grow and learn (Kolb). Play is also a process of freely recombining prior knowledge or divergent concepts, producing creative results and innovation (Piaget). Research confirms that play creates a space conducive to deep learning (Kolb), and is fundamental to humans on a biological level. (Riede).

Support for free play in schools is on the decline in many nations, although its importance is clearly recognized in early childhood education (Kessel). What about freedom and play throughout education, and throughout our adult lives? We propose that this is not only crucial to human flourishing, but critical in learning environments for both deep learning and for producing innovative individuals.

Researchers at the Huberman lab at Stanford University, are studying the outcomes of low-adrenaline, low-stakes play development in adults, and finding connections to flourishing in the reduction of anxiety (Huberman). Additionally, when adults and young people build play identities and make play a part of their day, creativity is greatly increased.

Play-based learning is often misunderstood. It is a powerful classroom tool when the teacher is involved with students' play and acts as guide, but it is not clear from research that play should be completely directed by students themselves. (Pyle). This curriculum proposes play that involves the teacher.



In scholarly literature, the concept of “collective effervescence” is used to describe group rituals in various cultures around the world. Researchers have even measured the heart rates of individuals performing and observing rituals to show that collective effervescence bonds human communities on a physical level (Xygalatas). Educators are beginning to propose that this term can be used to describe the excitement produced in a classroom of students as they work together or play together towards a common goal.

The curriculum here provides stand-alone activities to allow students to experience and reflect on collective effervescence as a learning experience and a way of flourishing.

Finally, the curriculum asks students to connect the divergent thinking produced by free play activities with creativity and innovation. This is a well-known benefit of play in educational settings and in adult life (Dominey). Creative play can be defined as a unifying state of group motivation, leading to innovation and the flourishing of a community (Bateson).

Closure

In closure, this curriculum provides exploration of Love, Learn, and Play as a way of flourishing. Students are asked to experience these modalities and reflect on their own flourishing as a result, and are also asked to study each concept on an intellectual level.

The curriculum is designed in age bands, with Love, Learn, and Play activities appropriate to grades 4-6, grades 7-8, and grades 9-10. All activities are designed to be flexible and easily modified for different schools serving diverse communities around the globe.

The curriculum suggests some supplementary materials widely available in the Western world, but does not require those supplies to deploy.

Cited Works

Alba, R. "How are Happiness and Learning Connected?" Edutopia. March 4, 2018
<https://www.edutopia.org/blog/happiness-learning-connection-rebecca-alber>.

Anderson, MR." The Spiritual Heart." Religions. 2020; vol.11 no.10. p.506.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11100506>.

Bateson, P. "Play, Playfulness, Creativity and Innovation" Animal Behavior and Cognition, vol. 1, no. 2, pp 99-112.

Bellert, A.; Graham, L. "Neuromyths and Neurfacts: Information from Cognitive Neuroscience for Classroom and Learning Support Teachers." Special Education Perspectives. 2013. vol.22 no.2. Pp 7-20.

Boaler, Jo. Limitless Mind: Learn, Lead, and Live Without Barriers. HarperOne, 2019, 256 pages.

Chapman, Gary D. The Five Love Languages. Walker Large Print, 2010.

Deci, E.; Vallerand, R.; Pelletier, L.; Ryan, R. "Motivation and education: The self-determination perspective. Educational Psychologist, vol. 26, no. 3, p. 325.

Edwards, S. "Radiating Love: Reflections on the Role of the Heart in Indigenous and Global Healing." Indilinga, vol. 16, no.1, Aug 2017
<https://www.heartmath.org/assets/uploads/2017/09/radiating-love.pdf>.

Cited Works

Goldstein, L.S. "Teacherly love: Intimacy, commitment, and passion in classroom life." *Journal of Educational Thought*, vol. 32, no. 3, pp. 217-236.

Grant, Carl A. "Cultivating Flourishing Lives: A Robust Social Justice Vision of Education." *American Educational Research Journal*, vol. 49, no. 5, 2012, pp. 910-34. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23319631>.

Greenberg, Mark T; Domitrovich, Celene E; Weissberg, Roger P.; Durlack, Joseph A. "Social and Emotional Learning as a Public Health Approach to Education." *Future of Children*, Vol. 27, no. 1, pp. 13-32, Spring 2017. <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1144819>.

Huberman, A. Podcast Huberman Lab, Stanford. <https://hubermanlab.com/using-play-to-rewire-and-improve-your-brain/>.

Immordino-Yang, Mary Helen. *Emotions, Learning, and the Brain: Exploring the Educational Implications of Affective Neuroscience*. W.W. Norton and Company, November 2016. 208 pages.

Karwowski, M. et al. "Delving into Creativity and Learning." *Creativity Research Journal*, vol. 32, no. 1, p. 4-16, Jul. 2019.

Kessel, J. "Let Our Children Play: The Importance of Play in Early Childhood Education." *University of Montana Journal of Early Childhood Scholarship and Innovative Practice*, vol. 2, no. 1, article 5. Apr. 2018. Koestler, A. *The Act of Creation*, One 70 Press, 2014.

Cited Works

Kolb, A. and Kolb, D. "Learning to Play, Playing to Learn." *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, vol. 23, no. 1, pp. 26-50, 2010.

Medina, John. *Brain Rules*. Pear Press, 2009. 301 pages.

Piaget, J. *To Understand is to Invent: The Future of Education*, Grossman Publishers, 1973.

Pyle, A.; Pyle, M.; Prioletta, J.; Alaca, B. "Portrayals of Play-Based Learning: Misalignments among Public Discourse, Classroom Realities, and Research." *American Journal of Play*, vol.13, no.1.

Reide, F.; Johannsen, N.; Hogberg, A.; Nowell, A.; Lombard, M. "The Role of Play Objects and Object Play in Human Cognitive Evolution and Innovation. *Evolutionary Anthropology*. Vol. 27, pp.46-49, 2018.

Templeton, J. *Agape Love*. Templeton Foundation Press, 1999, Templeton, PA. VanderWeele, Tyler J. "On the Promotion of Human Flourishing." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, Vol. 114, no. 31, August 2017, pp. 8148-8156.
<http://pnas.org/cgi.doi/10.1073/pnas.1702996114>.

Zimunya, Clive Tendai, et al. "The Feasibility of an Ubuntu Ethic in a Modernised World." *Journal of African Foreign Affairs*, vol. 2, no. 1-2, 2015, pp. 5-26. JSTOR,
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26664030>.

The Flourishing Child



LOVE

Elementary Grades

www.uef.org

An Introduction for Teachers



Welcome to Love, Learn, and Play (LLP) for children.

This curriculum consists of thirty activities designed to allow students to explore the concepts of Love, Learn, and Play as a framework for lifelong flourishing.

The activities may be used in order as a daily practice. Each is designed to take about 45 minutes to complete. Or, teachers may use them as stand-alone activities.

Each activity includes an Overview, a What to Do, and a Closure section. Some activities include supplemental materials that can be printed, but other options are offered for settings where printing is a challenge.

Most Closure sections include reflective discussion prompts. Teachers may use these prompts for student journaling before or after sharing ideas in discussion. Another way to use journaling to reinforce concepts is to have a “new vocabulary” section where students record new words they learn throughout the curriculum.

To read about the research basis for the LLP curriculum, and to read more about Love, Learn, and Play for human flourishing, visit the [Universal Enlightenment and Flourishing website](#).

United States Standards Alignment

This curriculum is aligned with four of the five CASEL competencies: Self-awareness, Self-management, Social awareness, and Relationship skills.



"I am a person through other people. My humanity is tied to yours."

-Ubuntu, a Zulu proverb

Researchers have defined and studied how successful teachers tie love for their students into teaching. Some ways teachers express love is through caring, fairness and respect, conscientiousness, relationship building, and enthusiasm (Deci).

How else do people use the word "love?" Most cultures use the term to express passion or enthusiasm for an external activity or item, or other artifacts. There is the love of friends, family, and of course, romantic love.

While this curriculum focuses on Agape Love (ubuntu, selfless service, "altruism"), students are asked to explore all of their understandings of the concept of love. It draws from SEL and life skills curricula, modern philosophical concepts such as the five love languages (Chapman), and older philosophical ideas from cultures around the world. Students also explore the science of the heart and mind connection, and the psychology and physiology of love (Anderson).



Overview

This activity can be used as a stand-alone activity or as an introduction to the Love, Learn, and Play lesson series. It is recommended as an ice-breaker and an opening activity for the study of Love as an avenue to human flourishing.

Rationale: This activity allows students to identify with others in their classroom community in unexpected ways. It promotes the idea that humans we encounter all have differences and similarities, and the “other” is worthy of love and caring.

What to do

Have students stand in a line on one side of the room or space. Create a real or imaginary line that students can cross and check for understanding. Offer the rules of the activity:

1. Listen to the statement I make.
2. If the statement is just like you, cross the line without touching anyone and stand on the other side.

Make statements such as “If you have a pet, cross the room.” A list of low-risk and high-risk statements are offered for your consideration below. When students have crossed the line, pause and state “Look to the left, look to the right, look across the line.” Give students a moment, and then have the students step back to their original positions.



What to do, continued...

A higher risk instruction is to have students meet the eyes of the students on their side, and the students on the other side, before crossing back to their original position.

Ask students not to have side conversations during the activity, the only voice in the room should be the teachers' during this activity.

After making ten or more statements, you may choose to move to the higher risk group of statements. Or, you may continue to use low-risk statements, or your own statements.

Closure

State that we played the game to get to know one another better, and to value ways we are the same and different. Ask students to share what they learned from the game. Reinforce positive statements and behaviors you noticed during the game and discussion.

"We draw the circle of family too narrow. Expanding our circle of love as we expand our awareness is key to living a meaningful life."

– Mother Teresa

Read the above quote by Mother Teresa. Ask students to relate any feeling they had during the activity to the quote above.



POSSIBLE STATEMENTS: LOW RISK

Have a pet
Speak another language
Like to jump rope
Have a little sister
Like to dance
Like to play volleyball
Like to do arts and crafts
Have a collection

Like to listen to music
Play music

Like to eat oranges
Have travelled to another
state or province

Like to watch soccer
Play soccer
Like to cook
Like to play (a favorite school game)
Like to watch (a favorite program)
Like to eat (a favorite local treat)
Like to travel
Have been to
(a local gathering place)
Have been at the school for (time)
Favorite subject is
(a popular school subject)
Favorite color is...
Favorite celebrity is...

POSSIBLE STATEMENTS: HIGH RISK

Have had a pet die
Have been in trouble
at school
Struggled to learn a
subject in school
Have felt left out

Had a nightmare
Have felt embarrassed
Had a broken bone
Been in the hospital
Moved far from friends
Had a fight
Felt bullied



Overview

In this activity, children visualize something or someone they love and identify ways they can express their love for this entity using the five love languages.

What to do

Have children close their eyes, or simply share verbally, a person or an entity they love. Suggest a caregiver in their life, a pet, a sibling, or a good friend. Explain that many people believe there are different ways of showing love, and write on a board (or give verbally) the five categories from the worksheet. Take the time to discuss the meaning of the words if needed. Brief explanations are given below if needed. Ask the students to share some ways they show love, or that their entity shows them love. As examples are given, put them in categories to give an example.

Have the students write or draw examples on the below worksheet in each category. Challenge them to give two in each category; they should stretch their concept of how love is expressed.

Closure

In small groups or as a whole class, have the students share their ideas voluntarily only. If the teacher chooses, a graphic of the five love languages may be posted in class at this point.



Explanations of the Five Languages of Children

Words of Affirmation:

Telling someone they are loved, valued, seen

Acts of Service:

Doing something the person values, without being asked

Receiving Gifts:

Giving someone something you know they would value

Quality Time:

Giving someone your full attention

Physical Touch:

Hugs, hand-holding, sitting with someone

Name:_____ **Date:**_____

How I express my love for:
Acts of Service
Receiving Gifts
Physical Touch
Quality Time
Words of Affirmation



Overview

In this activity, students and teacher(s) work together to identify an area or a person at the school that could be transformed, seen, or improved by a gesture of kindness and love enacted by the group. Students process the feelings they had while doing this gesture in the context of their physical feelings.

What to do

Introduce the following quote by Bell Hooks, and ask the students to respond with how they have seen, thought of, or experienced “love in action.” Students may be asked to use a journal to consider this, then share in pairs, then share what they heard with the group (think-pair-share), or another technique for reflecting may be used.

“Love is an action. Never simply a feeling.” – Bell Hooks

Next, have students brainstorm an area of their classroom, campus, or a group or member of the school community who would particularly benefit from a short act of kindness or love enacted by the group. Say, “what could we do to improve our school or help someone, that we could do together today? Is there something that would make a happy surprise for another class or a person, to show our love and appreciation?” The table below shows some examples that have been carried out by classes, if students need more prompting. Note that this can be a particularly fun activity for students if it is a surprise to the beneficiary(ies) of the activity.



What to do, continued...

Guide students to choose and complete an activity that is practical to do with the time, space, supplies, and norms of the school. NOTE: the closure activity is particularly important for the students' learning for this activity.

EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL ACTIVITIES

Cleaning another classroom

Organizing a desk for a staff member

Leaving flowers at teacher stations

Making cards for someone

Making a welcome garland

Decorating a door with positive messages

Hiding painted rocks around school

Organizing play equipment

Creating a small garden bed

Decorating a window

Bringing someone a new chair

Organizing a food gift

Closure

In closure, instruct the students that when they feel love and joy, their heart signals their brain by beating in certain rhythms. These positive feelings are associated scientifically with health and flourishing. With that in mind, ask them to consider how they felt when performing this act of love. Students may journal, or could be asked to draw, paint, dance, or otherwise interpret, process, and express their feelings.



Overview

In this activity, students take a more intellectual approach to learning about love by looking at the words used by different cultures to describe types of love. Students form groups and create a poster about a type of love by decorating the word for it, then present their art to the class.

What to do

If possible, print and use the posters showing the different words for love from different cultures. If printing is not available, write these words and give the definitions. After going over the words, have students form groups and create a very short presentation about one of the words for the class. They should include what it is, examples of it, and if possible, each group should create a colorful poster with the word in big letters, and decoration and drawings around it. If supplies are not available for this, students may simply share verbally.



What to do, continued...

The Words for Student Presentations

Philia: Greek. The love of friendship. Mutual respect and love requires the cooperation of another person to be your friend!

Ubuntu: Zulu. Love for all other humans. The idea that if any human is hurt, we are all hurt, and we are not human without one another.

Lowo Yame: Ewe. Literally translated as "breath of the heart." This word for love describes the physical feeling of love for other humans or for the universe.

Seva: Sanskrit. The love that comes from acts of selfless service. Altruistic love with no reciprocity (loving back) expected. Sanskrit has over 96 words for love!

Teng: Mandarin. This is the love of parents for their children. The character "teng" includes symbols for pain, and winter; to the Chinese, parents love their children so much that it hurts!

Pesa Nasoopedyadu: Northern Paiute. This is the feeling of being loved, knowing one is loved by a friend, parent, community, or a romantic partner.

Gra: Gaelic. Romantic love.

Jigar tala: Persian. This literally translates to "golden liver." It means that the person is vital to your very existence, just as a body cannot live without a liver.



Closure

If students accompany their presentation with a poster of their word, find a place and time to display the words in the learning space for several days, or until the end of the unit. If the classroom keeps a map and pins, a small paper with each word can be pinned in its place of origin.

Have the students consider the following quote from the Bhagavad Gita, and use think-pair-share or journal to allow a reflection of how this activity showed that love is a concept shared across cultures and borders and among all humanity.

“Love is the most powerful force in the universe. It is the eternal fire that burns within the heart and connects us all.”

– Bhagavad Gita, Hindu Scripture

Proverbs and Stories of Love Around the World



Overview

In this activity, the teacher finds proverbs and stories that they believe will increase their class's literacy about love in all its forms. This is intentionally left open to allow for different schools, settings, and cultures to bring local experience and wisdom into the classroom. A school is the center of a community, in any part of the world, and the freedom to educate children through the lens of that community is important.

What to do

Find stories from a local library, the school library, village or community elders, oral traditions, or a variety of spiritual texts about different types of love, and read or recite them to students.

The following is a list of published childrens' literature. These stories can be read aloud; they are relevant to this unit, age-appropriate, and would enhance learning in most modernized, constructivist, secular classrooms.

Proverbs and Stories of Love Around the World



What to do, continued...

Title	Author (s)	Publisher	Date
Love Is	Diane Adams	Chronicle Books	2017
I Love You Because	Jessica Love,	Harper Collins	2022
I Love You	Muon Thi Van		
Mama Do You Love Me	Barbara Joosse	Chronicle Books	1998
Loving Kindness	Deborah Underwood and Tim Hopgood	Henry Holt and Co.	2021
Love	Matthew De La Pena and Loren Long	Penguin Putnam Trade	2018
I Am Love:	Susan Verde and	Harry N.	2021
A book of compassion	Peter H. Reynolds	Abrams Inc.	
Love Makes a Garden Grow	Taeun Yoo	Simon and Schuster Trade	2023

Closure

There are many options for closure for this activity. A discussion harvesting what children think they learned from the story is one option. Students could create a journal response to the story using art and drawing, or writing down how they related to the characters. If the story has resonance and time allows, the children could form groups and act out the story for each other.



Overview

In this activity, students are challenged to practice one act of kindness each day in school or outside of school. They keep “bingo cards” in their journal, and each morning mark off which act of kindness they did. At the end of the unit, students reflect on what they learned from performing these acts.

What to do

Create bingo cards with small acts of kindness in each square, or download them, or use the included printable card. Have the students keep their cards at school, either alone in their desk, pinned to the wall, or in their journal. This is an activity that can be done throughout the unit, with daily reminders and share-outs. Instruct students that they should complete one activity from the card each day, either at school or at home. The class will then mark activities off at a routine time each day, while reflecting on how these activities felt, and sharing stories.

Closure

Have students reflect on how completing these activities made them feel each day. Were there ones that felt better than others? Did any or all of these activities produce a happy or joyful feeling? Ask students if they plan to carry on these activities when they are not being tracked in class.

Kindness Bingo



KIND ACTS

B I N G O

Read to someone	Tell someone they had a good idea today	Say something nice to your parent	Share your toys	Help someone with a chore
Take turns	Take out the trash	Set the table	Take care of a pet or plant	Call a friend or family member
Mail someone a letter	Apologize to someone	Free Space	Give a hug or a high-5	Hold the door for someone
Help clean after a meal	Make a card for someone	Pick up litter	Say 'please' and 'thank you'	Make a gift for your teacher
Make food for someone	Give a compliment	Help your teacher	Draw someone a picture	Eat lunch with a new friend

Share your completed card by tagging @PBSKIDS and use the hashtag #PBSKIDSBingo.



Overview

This activity introduces the concept of “flourishing,” gives the science of the relationship between love and human flourishing through a fun “snowball” activity, and gives students a chance to reflect on the “Love” unit.

What to do

Print the fact cards and cut them into individual facts. Crumple each paper up into a “snowball” and place them into a bucket or bowl. Write the word “flourishing” on the board and ask students to give their ideas of what “flourishing” looks like, and how it might relate to love. Write down responses on the board. Instruct the students that you will be throwing “snowballs” in the air, and they should each catch or retrieve one. Have the students then read their snowball to the class.

Closure

Ask the students to write in their journals, or respond verbally, giving the fact that intrigued them the most or made them the most curious to know more. If this activity is being used to close the Love series of activities, have the students write down their three most important takeaways from the unit, or their biggest discoveries about the world or themselves.

The Flourishing Child



LEARN

Elementary Grades

www.uef.org



Overview

In this activity, students learn about how any human brain can learn, grow, and improve at any point in life. They play a memory game and reflect on how a new neural pathway grew in their brain as they played.

What to do

Introduce this activity by asking the students whether they think their brain is always the same as it is when they are born, or if it grows. Guide discussion to the concept of "Neuroplasticity." This big word means that human brains can change and grow throughout your lifetime. When you do something new or learn something new, your brain grows and changes. Break down the word for students, "neuro" meaning brain and "plastic" means moldable or changeable.

Announce that the class is going to play a verbal memory game in groups. Groups of three are suggested for this activity. Now, tell the students that they will be packing for a pretend camping trip. The first group member can say, "I am going camping and I am going to bring..." and state something that begins with the letter"



What to do, continued...

- a. "The next person repeats that statement, and adds an item that begins with the letter "
- b. "Groups are instructed to continue and try to get as far through the alphabet as possible.

Note that this can be modified in areas where camping is not a common activity; students can "pack" for another journey that is familiar to them.

Closure

Have students reflect in a larger group discussion. Prompts for discussion are:

- What did it feel like to "strengthen" your brain muscle?
- What else do you do that feels like 'growing your brain'?
- How does it feel to know that your brain can grow and improve, that you have 'neuroplasticity'?

Be sure to mention the vocabulary word several times in the discussion to cement this concept. If students are keeping a journal as they work through Love, Learn, Play, they can be asked to process and reflect the activity in their journals.



Overview

Human beings are physically and genetically predisposed to feel comfortable and productive at specific times during a 24 hour daily cycle. In this activity, students are introduced to the bird model of chronotypes (lark, hummingbird, owl) and asked to consider how circadian rhythms and sleep cycles affect learning and flourishing.

What to do

Let students know that today we will consider how sleep affects our happiness and learning throughout the day. Invite students to reflect and comment on how a good night sleep, or a poor night sleep, make them feel during their day.

Let students know that most people have a certain time of day they fall asleep, wake up, and feel active during the day and night. It can change at different times in life. Introduce the word "chronotype," and break it down for students into parts: "chrono" or time, and "type."



What to do, continued...

Introduce the bird model of chronotypes:

Owl: Owls are birds that only are active at night, and sleep in the day. Owl people like to stay in bed until 10 am, or after breakfast for most people (compare this to a school day schedule). Owls like to do work after dark.

Lark: Larks are the birds that start singing when the sun comes up, and are very busy in the morning. Lark people usually do not need an alarm clock to wake up, and they usually fall asleep right after dark.

Hummingbird: Hummingbirds are active all day and into the evening. Hummingbird people are somewhere in the middle of owls and larks, or they don't quite fit either one.

Give students the worksheet with all three birds pictured. Have them draw or write examples of people, animals, pets, or characters they know from their experience who are examples of each type. You can prompt them with popular characters from stories you've read in class, or movies or shows they know. Remind them of pets, family members, and animals or plants they have studied that might fit into the worksheet.

If printing is not available, each bird can be drawn on a board and the class can work together to give examples.



Closure

Ask students to repeat what they have learned about Chronotypes.

Prompt a discussion with the questions:

- What chronotype do you think you are, and do you think it affects your day?
- Is sleep important for you to feel joyful during your day?
- What do you do, or what can you do, to make sure you get enough sleep?"

Temporal Preference



Name: _____

Owl



Lark



Hummingbird



Procrastination



Overview

In this activity, students are invited to consider procrastination through the metaphor of the monkey, the dark woods, the dark playground, the light playground, and flow by creating a visual map of completing a task. Students model breaking down a task into more manageable chunks to overcome procrastination.

What to do

Ask students to give their understanding of the word “procrastination.” Have them report how they feel when they are procrastinating compared to how they feel when they have completed an important, difficult task and are spending some leisure time they earned. Reiterate that learning can involve hard work, but learning new things is inherently joyful and produces happiness. Pose the question, “How do we make ourselves do the hard part?”



What to do, continued...

Introduce five elements of procrastination and task completion:

1. **The instant gratification monkey, or the “immediate fun” monkey:**

This is an invisible monkey telling you to have fun all the time.

The monkey is not good at making decisions for you.

2. **The dark playground:** when you are playing or doing things besides the hard work you need to do, you are in the ‘dark playground.’ Ask students to share what this is like for them.

3. **The light playground:** when you are playing after you finish what you know you’re supposed to do, so you are truly free while you play. Ask students to share what this is like for them.

4. **Flow:** This is when you are doing the hard work you are supposed to do, and you are getting it done and learning from it and even being creative, and surprisingly perhaps, feeling joy as you go. Ask students to share what this is like for them.

5. **The dark gates:** Before you start a task, this is what you have to push through to make yourself start.

Procrastination



What to do, continued...

Now, draw a map for all students to see that looks roughly like the diagram below.

Ask students to recall a time when they procrastinated on something they thought would be hard, then completed the task and felt happy and like they learned something. Give them time to ask questions and to think of an example. Then, have the students draw their own map showing each component of their own procrastination process. Their maps should have representations of each of the five stages presented in the lesson.

Closure

Have students share their map and describe their process to the class. If time allows, give the students an example of a difficult task and have them break it down into a list of smaller tasks for themselves. Instruct them that this is one common method of conquering procrastination.



Overview

This activity gives suggestions for tried and tested mindfulness routines. The first routine is an activity known as a body scan. Children lay down in a comfortable place while the teacher guides them through body awareness by focusing on different muscles. The second list gives simple and fun ways of focusing on breathing. Both modalities have been proven to increase attention, focus, and concentration.

What to do

1. Body Scan

The body scan is a key practice in mindfulness, and an easy one to teach to children.

Invite the students to lie down on their back on a comfortable surface and close their eyes;

Have the children squeeze every muscle in their body as tight as they can as you call out the muscle and its location.

One at a time, have the students ball up their toes and feet, squeeze their hands into fists, and make their legs and arms hard as rock, then relax.

Ask the students release all their muscles and quietly relax for a few minutes. You can call out body parts from head to toe and remind the students to focus on each area and relax those muscles.

Invite the children to think about how their body is feeling throughout the activity.

This simple exercise gets kids to be more aware of their bodies and helps them find a way to be present in the moment.



What to do, continued...

2. Mindful Breathing

Inform the children that paying attention to their breathing is an important way to focus their mind and increase their attention and concentration. Here are four simple ideas for practicing mindful breathing with children. They can be practiced as a single lesson here, or may be integrated regularly into the school day.

- **Blow bubbles.** Give each child a small bubble blowing set, or pass around one. Have the children blow bubbles without speaking or laughing. Invite them to see how slowly they can blow the bubbles, making them as large as possible. Invite them to experiment with the shape of their mouth as they breathe out, then have them pay attention to the speed of their inhales as they work.
- **Spin pinwheels.** Craft or purchase pinwheels. Have the children keep them spinning using only their breath, quietly. Invite them to experiment with long, slow breaths or short bursts of breath. After the activity discuss which type of breathing worked better and felt better.
- **Stuffed animals on the tummy.** Have the children lay down, and place a stuffed animal or doll on their tummy. Invite the children to quietly practice raising the animal as high in the air as possible using their inhale. Invite them to move the animal as low as possible using their exhale.
- **Craft streamers.** Create a craft using long streamers or ribbons. Have the children quietly experiment with moving the streamers using only their breath.



Closure

Have the students discuss how their bodies felt during the activities. Ask them if they felt better afterwards, and if they notice that they can focus better after the activities are completed. Remind them that focusing on how their bodies feel can help them focus their mind on other activities throughout the day.

Working Memory Models



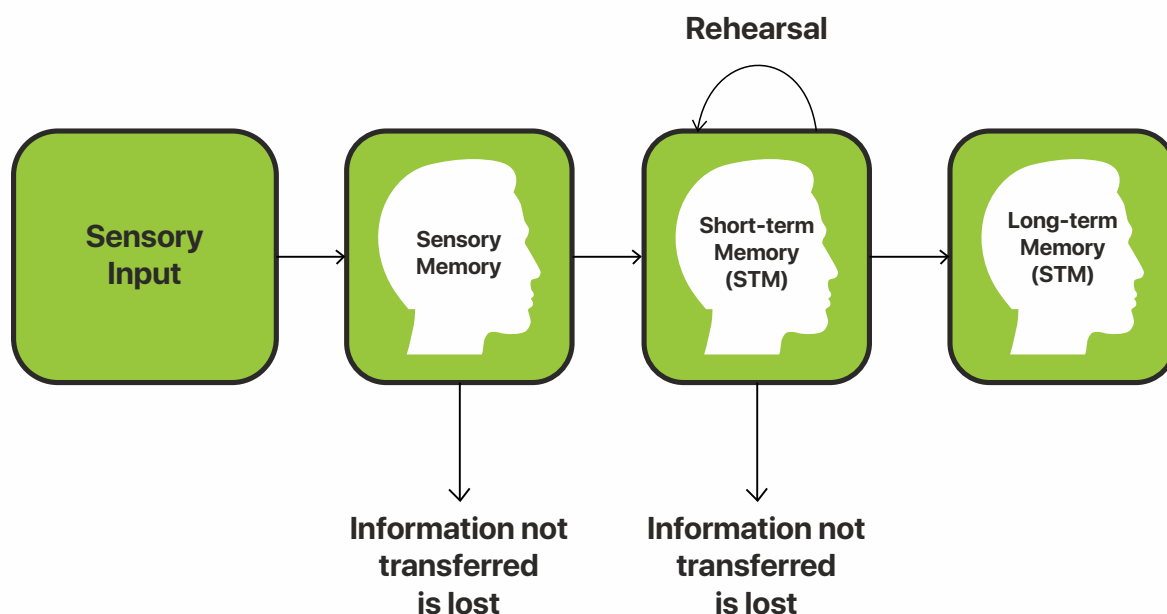
Overview

This activity gives children a model of how their brains remember things like words, facts, or the way to solve different math problems. It is based on Baddely's working memory model, a metaphor that is used by neuroscientists to explain how information humans take-in is committed to long-term memory.

What to do

Let the students know that they will be studying how their brains take in facts and processes like solving math problems and commit those things to memory. Emphasize that if they understand how their brain works, and they use their brain to learn regularly, they will get stronger and better at it. It's time to understand our brain muscle!

Draw, or display, the following diagram for students to consider. Go over each word with the students.





What to do, continued...

Sensory: information taken in by seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, or tasting.

Sensory memory: this is the gate that decides whether something is important enough to start to learn and remember. Sometimes things happen right in front of us, and this gate does not even open to let it through to our awareness!

Short term memory: Things you only remember for thirty seconds, or half a minute.

Long term memory: Things you remember always

Rehearsal: practicing or repeating something.

Hold up an object such as a stuffed animal. Explain that this object represents the information the brain is about to learn. Ask the students for ideas about how they could form a dance or machine demonstrating working memory. Guide them to the idea that a group will be the sensory input representing eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and fingers; a group will be the sensory memory, a group will be short term memory, and a group will be long term memory.

Have the class stand in these distinct groups. You are the teacher, and your job is to get the sensory memory to accept the object in the first place (you make the object seem important enough to learn!). Pass the object to the sensory memory group.



What to do, continued...

Have the sensory memory group pass the object to the short term memory, Have the short term memory throw the object up and down at least three times. Then have them throw the object to the long term memory group; they should hold the object.

Next, have a basket full of small objects that are safe to throw. One option is to simply use balled up paper. A more preparation-intensive method is to have facts the class is learning printed on the papers before balling them up.

Inform the class that you will now be presenting more input, more quickly. If the input is dropped at any point, it won't be learned. If the short term memory group fails to toss and catch three times (representing rehearsal, repetition, or practice), the "input" is forgotten (dropped on the floor). One student can be designated to step outside and monitor this in the short term memory group.

You may practice the process again, then designate a one-minute period. Say "start," then hand or toss multiple light objects (balled up paper) into the sensory memory group.

At the end of one minute, see how much "input" was committed to long term memory and how much ended up on the floor. Note that the long term memory group may not be able to hold all of the objects; they can drop objects if needed.

Play this game again, if it feels right and the timing works.



Closure

Discuss this activity with the students, using the prompts,

"How much information did not even make it to short term memory? This is like things someone said they told you, but you don't remember being told. Your sensory memory did not let it through."

"How much information was dropped from short term memory? This is like things that either were not repeated or practiced within thirty seconds, or that you didn't focus on or find important enough to keep."

"How much really made it to long term memory? What are some ways you've learned to be sure things make it into your memory?" Responses to this are helpful to keep in a class "parking lot" for reference, for example, written on the board in a place that will not be erased, recorded in the journal, or made into a poster.



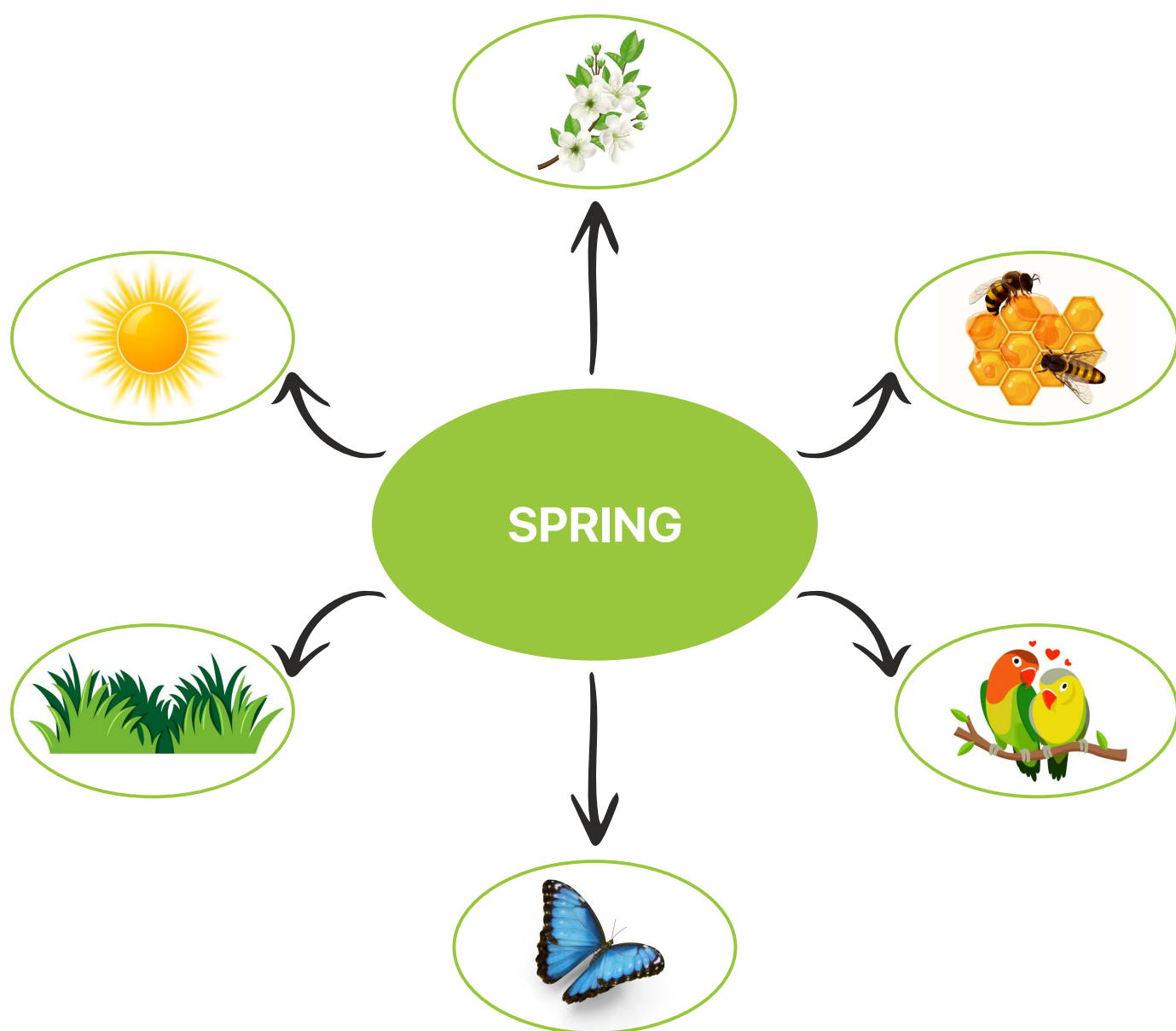
Overview

In this activity, students will use a technique of note-taking that has been proven to help people learn and commit information and learning to memory. It involves processing information as it is taken-in in a creative way. Students write or draw the topic of a lecture, film, reading, or lesson in a circle in the middle of a piece of paper, then draw or write what they hear around it, connecting the pieces of information with lines. For reference, teachers may want to prepare by reviewing Hazel Wagner's TED talk on mind mapping [here](#).

What to do

Be ready with a story, a lecture, a film, or simply an explanation of something you would like the students to learn about. Inform the students that today we will practice a technique called "mind-mapping" that will help them take in and remember information. Let them know that there are many techniques they will learn throughout their education, but this is a good example for showing them that they can learn new ways of learning throughout life.

First tell a very short story and demonstrate the mind-mapping technique on the board. Put the title in the middle and circle it, then record and connect points. An example of a simple mind map is [here](#):





What to do, continued...

Now, tell the story or lecture, or read the book, or show the film that you would like the students to mind-map. Take time to ensure each student has a center area that states the topic or title of the story, then pause frequently to check for understanding.

Closure

Have students share and review their mind maps with the larger group. Ask them to reflect on whether they learned more by using this technique, and check-in a day later as well, asking if they retained more information by using mind-mapping. Let students know that there are many ways they can learn to learn and become better at learning new things, in school and outside of school as well. Learning throughout life leads to happiness and flourishing.



Overview

In this activity, students are invited to make the connection between creativity and joyful feelings. Students complete an example of a creative, inventive activity (SCAMPER) and reflect on how creativity enters their learning process and their lives.

What to do

Let the students know that they will design a new invention today using something from the classroom. Have a set of simple and common objects available (some examples of successful SCAMPER objects include utensils, paper bags, boxes, paper clips, combs or brushes). Have each student take one object (the entire class can have the same object, or it can be mixed) and visualize how they might use it, reinvent, or change it as you give the following prompts, They should write their ideas down after each prompt.



What to do, continued...

SCAMPER prompts:

S–Substitute.

What else could this be? Who else might use it?

Could it be made from other materials?

C–Combine.

Would you combine it with other objects, or use more than one?

Would you combine it with other ideas?

A–Adapt.

What other ideas do you have? What else is like this?

Can you think of new uses?

M–Modify/Magnify/Minimize.

Can you make a new form of it, add, or take away from it?

Can you make it stronger, smaller, higher, longer, condense it, or subtract from it?



What to do, continued...

P-Put to other use.

What is a new use for this? If you modify it, how will it be used?

R-Rearrange/reverse.

Can you interchange components of it, make it in a new pattern or layout, or make it opposite of itself?

After students have written down some ideas during this prompting process, have them start a new page with a drawing of a new invention, made from the object they are considering.

Closure

Have students share their inventions and ideas with the group. Ask the students to reflect on how it felt to be creative during this time. Was it hard? Was it joyful and fun? Ask the students to write about a time they were happy being creative and share with the group.



Overview

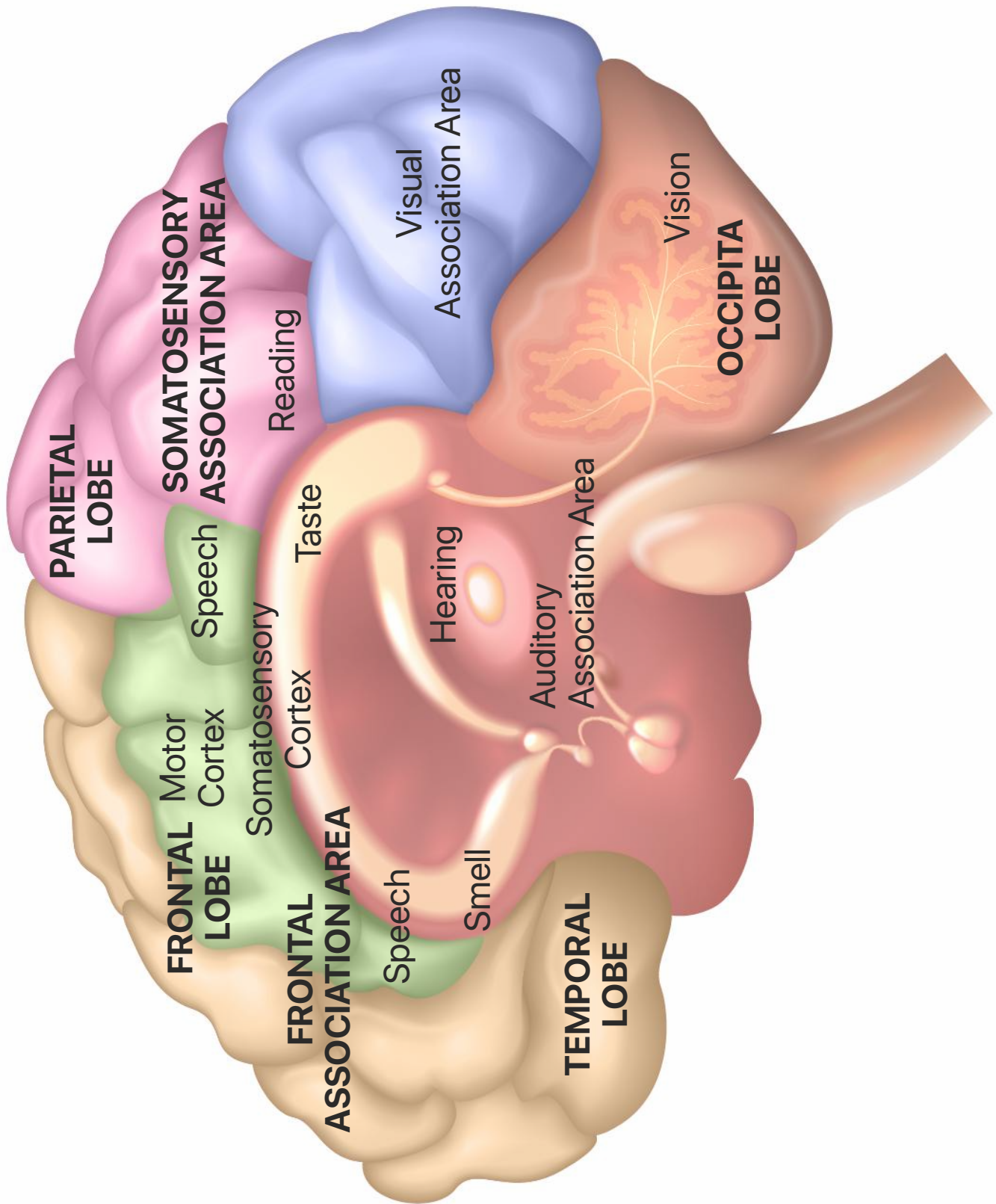
In this activity, students will create paper hats they can wear that show the areas of their brain. Research shows that studying the brain and how it works helps students improve their learning outcomes. This is simply an anatomy lesson on the brain, presented in a fun way.

What to do

There are two possibilities for this activity.

One is to simply download, print, and follow the instructions for the famous brain-hat found [here](#). The hat is a colorful, wearable hat with the parts of the brain clearly labeled.

Another way to accomplish this is to actually use the diagram to draw on a hat, giving kids the vocabulary as you work. You can have a volunteer wear the hat. For reference, here is the diagram of the parts of the brain and their accepted functions.





Closure

Explain that sometimes the “prefrontal cortex” is called the “wizard brain,” because it's a part that can control learning, decision making, and thinking. It's also a part of the brain that can grow and flourish if we practice using it by learning new things.



Overview

This activity introduces the students to the idea that when we are engaged emotionally in what we are learning, we learn things better and more permanently. Students create their own emotion reference chart that they can use to check-in and regulate their feelings daily or as needed.










What to do

Instruct the students that when we are feeling happy and confident in school, we learn more. Sometimes we all feel anxious and fearful, and that can make paying attention and learning difficult for us. One way to overcome negative emotions is to simply check-in with yourself, and name your feelings for the day.

Have the students draw a very simple face and experiment with making it look like it is experiencing different emotions. Students may be creative, as long as the drawings are fairly simple. Have the students identify nine or more emotions they might experience or have experienced in their lives, and write them on the board. Finally, have students create their own visual chart of each emotion by drawing small faces expressing each one. An example of a finished emotional reference chart is here.



FEELINGS CHART

		
SCARED	HAPPY	SAD
		
ANGRY	EXCITED	WORRIED
		
SURPRISED	SILLY	FRUSTRATED



Closure

Have the students keep their charts in their journals, desk, or notebook. Let them know that referencing the chart and nameing how they are feeling each day, or even more often, can help them achieve a calmer state of mind to be receptive to learning.

Mirror Neurons



Overview

In this activity, students will learn the idea of mirror neurons and will reinforce the concept by mirroring a partner's actions in slow motion.

Mirror neurons are cells in the brain that automatically mimic another person's emotional state and allow us to empathize, and learn, from others.

What to do

Ask students if they have ever seen someone feel sad and felt sad themselves. Allow time for storytelling, then let them know that mimicking emotions we see is a function of cells in our brain called "mirror neurons." These same neurons allow us to observe a teacher or another person and learn language and new words from them as well. These neurons allow us to empathize with people, and learn from them.



What to do, continued...

Tell the students that the class will do an activity to attune and activate our mirror neurons.

- Place the students in pairs, and have each pair stand up and face each other at a distance of one meter or less.
- Let the students know that when you call “start,” they are to move in exact coordination with their partner.
- It is important that the pairs do not choose a leader or follower, they simply sense who is moving and follow or lead as appropriate.
- They must stay in motion, stay silent, and should be advised to move very slowly at first.

The most successful pair in the game is the pair who moves in the best synchronization.

Allow this activity to continue for three minutes, keeping students quiet as they work. You may stop and start again if necessary.

Closure

Have students reflect on the challenges and successes they experienced with their partners. Repeat the description of mirror neurons for reinforcement.

Pruning–Use it or Lose It



Overview

In this final activity, students sum up and reflect on the ways they have “learned about learning,” how learning can help them flourish, and how they can grow and improve their minds throughout their lifetime. They make a shared commitment to use their minds to learn new things.

What to do

Explain to the students that the brain is made of lots of cells called neurons, and they grow and renew throughout life. The brain also “prunes” or cuts away neurons that are not used, so it is important to use the brain to learn new things.

Have the students think back on what they have learned in this unit, with prompting (you can read over the activity titles or use another method).

Have them record three lists, or use a blank Venn diagram or other graphic organizer:

Brain facts - Learning and Happiness - Growing the Mind

Have the students brainstorm out loud what belongs in each category from what they have learned in the unit, or from what they know.

Give them time to record their own lists, adding more than was mentioned out loud if they like.

Closure

Share the list items. Ask the students how they will commit to growing their learning abilities from now on in order to feel fulfillment.

The Flourishing Child



PLAY

Elementary Grades

www.uef.org



Overview

In this activity, students simply state and reflect on what “play” looks like for them, how much they play during their daily lives, and how they think it is important to them. Students learn that play and play identity are very important to human beings and need to be cultivated throughout life.

What to do

Open a discussion with the class about the meaning of the word “play.” Does it simply mean to use a toy or engage in a sport? Or is it a feeling? Is it different for everyone, or do people always play in the same way?

Record students’ ideas on the board. Lead them to the idea that everyone is different in how they like to play, and that perhaps the best definition of “play” is a feeling:

- Play is self-directed (you don’t do it because someone else wants you to accomplish something)
- When you “play” you feel happy and present in the moment
- “Play” can look different for everyone, and the ways you play can change throughout life.

Finally, have students draw pictures of themselves playing.



Closure

Have the students share their pictures of playing with the class, and talk about what they drew and why. Emphasize the differences and similarities between how students experience “play,” and if possible, share what it looks like for you to play.



Overview

In this activity, students learn that sometimes we need reminders to play during our day. Each student creates a jar, bag, or container with activities that make them feel light, creative, and happy written on small pieces of paper or objects. The jars can then be used when they need a “lift” to guide their play.

What to do

- Ask the students to recall a time when they felt sad, angry, frustrated, or unable to play.
- Inform them that everyone feels too “heavy” sometimes and needs to be reminded of what they can do to “lighten” their mood or disconnect from worries.
- Have them brainstorm and record things they do that make them feel light, creative, and/or happy.

This can be done as a whole class, in small groups, or individually. Ideas should be shared with the bigger group.



What to do, continued...

Then, give the students bags, boxes or jars to decorate.

Have them write the activities they brainstormed on small pieces of paper (or stones, or cards; the possibilities are endless).

Students are making these for themselves, they should not record anything they do not wish to do.

The students can then mix up the activities in the container, and pull one out at random to do whenever they need a "lift."

Closure

It is to the teachers' discretion as to whether these activity containers are a practical and useful thing to keep at school, or whether they should go home with the students.

When students are having a difficult moment or day, the activities they placed in the jar can be referenced or used.

Silly Stories: Creativity and Play

Overview

In this activity, children work in small groups to create “silly stories” from mixed up story stones. Groups draw characters, places, and things, then mix them up and work together to create a story. This activity reinforces the idea that feeling silly together, and mixing things up creatively, is one way to flourish through play.

What to do

Be ready with a bag or box full of characters, one full of places, and one full of things.

There are many ways to represent each category.

A beautiful option is to write words on smooth stones.

Cutting out or printing and cutting pictures is another option.

Or, objects such as small toys can be collected to represent themselves.

If needed, here are some suggestions that have worked well for each category.



What to do, continued...

Characters	Places	Objects
Ninja	Dark forest	Stars
Fairy	Outer space	Magic wand
Ladybug	The playground	Floating shoes
Superhero	Garden	Trampoline
Astronaut	Under the sea	Magic fruit
Circus performer	The library	Bicycle
Inventor	In the snow	Sparkling jewel
Kitty cat	Castle	Helmet
Queen	In a big city	Space ship
Sports star	At the market	Picnic basket

Closure

Have the students reflect on whether they felt happy and silly while creating the story together. Remind them that play can be enhanced when it is creative and shared with others, and that as you grow up, play and creativity go together very closely.



Overview

In this activity, children commit to learning a new skill that feels fun and creative to them. This is an activity that continues throughout the unit and perhaps the school year.

This activity is most successful when the group checks in weekly and sets a goal for the coming week, and shares what they learned or did since the last check-in. It is simply a group support network for individual exploration of play as learning new skills.

What to do

Inform the children that they will be learning a new skill during the unit.

Have them write down or draw 14 ideas for new skills they would like to learn in life, and would enjoy learning. *There is a reason for this amount; research shows that for most people, the first 7-11 ideas come with ease, but beyond that one must stretch their thinking and work at it.*

Ask them to form small groups or partnerships and share their ideas.

Let them know that they will be responsible for sharing the top five ideas of their partner or a group member.



What to do, continued...

Allow time for discussion, then report-out in the large group (the entire class). Ask the children to pick their absolute top skill, and advise them how to eliminate anything that seems unreasonable or magical (for example, they can't learn to fly!).

Now, let them know that they will be supported to learn this skill they picked. They should begin by writing down a goal for what they will do towards learning this by next week.

Each week, the teacher should note each student's goal, keep the discussion timely so that all students may share in the period allotted by the teacher, and ask about whether or not students were able to reach the goal they set in the prior week.

The teacher may guide students by creating a table with stars for goals completed.



What to do, continued...

One important prompt for this weekly discussion is to ask whether the students learned, and felt happy and joyful as they worked towards their goal that week.

If not, the teacher may choose to advise the students to brainstorm a new skill to learn. Sometimes, students choose a skill that is not truly interesting to them, and need to be redirected. If a student is not meeting their goals, asking whether they chose the wrong skill and would like to start over is appropriate.

Note that their weekly goals may be big or small, they are their goals and theirs alone. They should not be judged if they do not meet and complete goals on a given week, in this case, their self-motivation and autonomy should be respected.



Closure

For this activity, closure can occur at various times in the process.

For example, if a student chooses to learn how to write a song, they may have work in progress or a finished song very quickly, or at the end. They can move on to a new goal, or can write more songs.

The weekly meetings should also act as a chance to share their work with their community.

When the weekly meetings are at an end, the students should reflect on how it felt to play in a way that they directed only for themselves. They should reflect on how trying new things, of their own choice, is a very important form of play throughout life. They should talk or write about how this process connected to fulfillment.

Collective Effervescence: Speaking Through Dance



Overview

Most human cultures throughout history have engaged in some form of ritual leading to what has been called “collective effervescence.”

In studying this phenomenon, anthropologists have linked such rituals to synchronization of heart rate response throughout a gathering of humans.

In other words, science supports the idea that humans need to bond through collective experiences of play. This phenomenon occurs in cultures across the globe, from firewalking rituals to even rock concerts.

Collective Effervescence is simply a shared experience of excitement and fulfillment.

In this activity, students are asked to choreograph a short dance about something that is important to them, perform it for the group, and reflect on how that may have been fulfilling for them.

Dance is a form of expression that is almost always associated with collective effervescence.

Collective Effervescence: Speaking Through Dance



What to do

Choose a topic or theme that is of current interest or study by the class. Or, give the students freedom to choose.

Break the class into groups of 4-6 students, and have each group choreograph a short, 1-2 minute dance to express the theme, topic, or idea of their choice.

Allow students to choose music that is appropriate for the norms of the school community, or, if audio speakers and connections to music files are not available, the dance may be silent or they may perform music (sing, play beats).

Ask them not to tell their classmates what the topic is, simply give a title, and perform for each other.

Give the students a good amount of time to work (this generally takes a minimum of thirty minutes of work time), and check-in and encourage progress.

Circulate to be sure that groups stay on task.

At the end of the given time, have the students perform for each other.



Closure

Ask the students to reflect on the elements of play that were present in this experience of collective effervescence, including:

- Collaboration
- Physical movement
- Combining different ideas in unexpected ways (the topic, and dancing)
- Performance before a community

Have the students reflect on how this made them feel, and guide them to making connections with fulfillment.

Collective Effervescence: Puppet Show



Overview

In this activity, students will build on the skills and openness they experienced during the prior dance activity by creating a free-form story together and acting it out with puppets.

There are suggested formats for creating and deploying puppets in the classroom. For an audience, students may invite school staff, other classes, or parents to the show.

What to do

Let the students know that they will be creating a puppet show.

The only prompt for the story they will create is that they must inform the audience on something about what it is like to be their age at school.

The only requirement for the show is that there must be a narrator to guide the story, and they must have two full rehearsals.

This activity works best in groups of six or fewer, so classes may have multiple groups creating multiple shows. Depending on the type of puppets used, building the show can take more than one designated class period.

Collective Effervescence: Puppet Show



What to do, continued...

Simple options for puppet creation include:

- Using puppets that are already made (just provide a very large variety- this is the fastest option)
- Paper bag puppets (just brown lunch bags and markers)
- Stick puppets (paper cut-out characters, and taped onto sticks)
- Shadow puppets (this requires a strong light source, a box, and waxed paper to make a theater- this is the most complex option)

Students may sit under a desk to perform the puppet show, no complicated puppet theatre is needed.

Closure

Have a performance of the puppet shows, with great fanfare!

Have the students discuss their process of creating the show, and be open to hearing both about what felt successful and what did not.

Ask them if having the freedom to create was fulfilling for them.

Creativity is a form of play that is usually very fulfilling.

Collective Effervescence: Classroom Kaizen



Overview

In this activity, students choose a quick and manageable way to make a meaningful improvement to their classroom environment.

Educators believe that when students work together toward a common goal, they often experience a form of play as a community.

A “kaizen” is a quick project that delivers a measurable improvement. In this case, in the context of play, students will simply be asked to create an improvement and reflect on it.

What to Do

Let the students know that they will “play” in class today by working together to make something better.

Have them form groups of eight or fewer students, and brainstorm ideas to improve the classroom environment.

Kaizens can be seemingly very small improvements, such as re-organizing a bookshelf or making better labels for the coat rack. If students generate ideas that will take more than one class period, direct them towards smaller things.



What to do, continued...

The lesson here is that even if something is not working for them, or making them feel heavy, there is no reason not to lighten up by making a small improvement.

Students should have ten minutes to discuss their ideas and narrow them down, in their groups. Then, they should have twenty minutes to implement the idea.

Closure

Have the students, in discussion or journals or both, reflect on how they feel that making their learning environment better with their group felt like "play."

Guide them towards the idea that their efforts were self-directed, creative, and collaborative, all elements of fulfilling play.



Overview

In this summative activity, a period is simply given to create a group poster on the ways that play can help human beings flourish as a community and as individuals.

What to Do

Begin by reading the following quote to the students:

“This is the real secret of life, to be completely engaged with what you are doing here and now. And instead of calling it to work, calling it to play.”

—Alan Watts

Remind the students of each of the activities they have been asked to do during “play” unit.

You may write the names of the activities, or something to jog students' memory of each one, on the board. Ask the students to think about the quote, and the activities, and how they might relate to each other.

Use a large piece of paper, or the board, and write the word “play” in large letters.



What to do, continued...

Have students write, and draw, their thoughts and ideas of how play connects to flourishing in life on smaller pieces of paper, and assemble all of the work into one poster by gluing, or allowing students to copy onto the board

Take a picture of the finished board to share with the class digitally, or post the assembled poster. This is a group reflection of the importance of play for human flourishing.

Closure

Leave the image of the finished board where the students can see it daily, particularly as they work through the last two activities.



Overview

In this activity, students are asked to consider their daily schedule, and how much time they spend in fulfilling and true play.

What to Do

Have the students write out their daily timeline school day schedule on a piece of paper.

If this fits with a math lesson, the amount of time spent in play can be calculated by addition or percentages.

Inform students that many cultures spent only 2-3 hours of every 24 hour day working, and had a great deal of time for play.

Ask them why this might be important.

Ask students if they can make more time for play, and whether their play feels more fulfilling when they put it after their work time in the day.

Closure

If time for play feels like a deficit in the class, meaning students don't seem to be getting enough time to play, have the students strategize how to fix the problem. Also, daily check-ins about play time can be instituted.

Collective Effervescence: The Box Story



Overview

In this activity, students form groups and turn a simple cardboard box into a part of an imaginary story, or a new invention.

What to Do

If available, read *A Box Story* by Kenneth Kit Lamug.

If not, simply start by asking students to take two minutes to write down as many ideas as they can about what a simple cardboard box could be, or could be made-into.

Have the students form groups of three, and give each group a cardboard box.

Boxes can be different sizes or uniform.

Have each group take twenty minutes to transform the box into something more than a box.

If available, you may provide supplies to students such as child-safe cardboard saws, markers or crayons, glue, and things to stick on the box.

Closure

Have the students share what they built, and have them reflect on why their group chose this for their box.

If time and space allow, students can continue work and play with their box over several days during play time.



UNIVERSAL
ENLIGHTENMENT
& FLOURISHING

social@uef.org

WWW.UEF.ORG

